

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 200929Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2583

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUNQWAHRAN

S E C R E T SANAA 1593

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TA

KE MASS, YE, SA

SUBJ: PLAN FOR SAG ACTIVATION OF SAG ASSISTANCE

TO YAR AIR FORCE

REF: JIDDA 3538

1. BELIEVE THOUGHTFUL FUGGESTIONS OUTLINED REFTEL ARE SOUND COURSE OF ACTION BALANCING OUR DESIRE KEEP DOWN USG INVOLVEMENT WITH REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WHAT IS NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH TASK.

2. DOZEN F-5A'S IS REASONABLE INPUT GIVEN SIZE AND LEVEL OF TRAINING OF YARAF. WE BELIEVE TRAINING OF PILOTS IN SAUDI

ARABIA WOULD BE DESIREABLE AS STEP TO STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN AIR FORCES, ALTHOUGH IRAN ALSO GOOD CHOICE. (WE ARE NOT CLEAR FROM COMMENTS BY IRANIAN AMBASSADOR HERE WHETHER IRANIANS IN FACT HAVE CAPABILITY. PERHAPS TEHRAN COULD CLARIFY).

3. YARAF FACILITIES ARE ALMOST NON-EXISTENT. MAIN BASE AT HODEIDA AIRPORT HAS, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO FACILITIES FOR COVERED STORAGE OR MAINTENANCE IN CLIMATE WHERE SAND STORMS,

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INTENSE HEAT, AND SALT-WATER CORROSION ARE CONSTANT PROBLEMS.

LIVING QUARTERS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN SHEDS. BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO HAVE YARAF START AGAIN FROM SCRATCH USING AS BASE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT SANAA, WHICH HAS 11,000 FOOT RUNWAY AND WAS OPERATIONAL BASE FOR EGYPTIAN MIG'S AND IL-28'S DURING CIVIL WAR. FROM POINT OF VIEW OF LIVING CONDITIONS AND EMBASSY CONTACT, SANAA WOULD ALSO BE FAR MORE DESIREABLE CHOICE AS SITE FOR ANY SMALL NORTHROP PRESENCE WHICH WE AGREE MIGHT BE ESSENTIAL.

4. CHOICE OF F-27 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT OR SIMILAR IS GOOD ONE GIVEN UNIMPROVED CONDITIONS SMALLER AIRPORTS. SUGGEST THAT TWO OF THEM SHOULD HAVE CIVILIAN CONFIGURATION WITH REMOVABLE SEATS AND ASSIGNED TO YEMEN AIRWAYS, BEING AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY TRANSPORT WHENEVER REQUIRED. THIS WOULD SIMPLIFY YEMEN'S OVERALL AIRCRAFT SITUATION WHILE GIVING A FINANCIAL BOOST TO AIRLINE.
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